Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ World History (GEZ)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Reading 2.3: Case Studies of Popes vs. Kings**

**Case Study #1: Pope Gregory VII & Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV**

When Gregory VII became pope, Henry IV was emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Henry disregarded the decrees of Gregory concerning **investiture** and appointments of members of the Church leadership hierarchy. He also refused to recognize the pope as his superior. When Gregory attacked him for these things, Henry wrote him a letter in which he refused even to address him as pope, saying he was no pope, but a false monk, and demanded that he leave Rome. “I Henry, king by the grace of God, demand this of you,” he wrote, “and with all my bishops I say unto you, Come down, come down.”

Pope Gregory responded be **excommunicating** the emperor. Henry threatened to overthrow Gregory as pope, but for two months he took no action. Then, realizing that he would be ruined unless he made peace with the pope, he set out for Italy. It was midwinter and Gregory was at Canossa, a strongly fortified castle in the Apennines. Henry was at Speyer in Germany and with a very small group of supporters he traveled through Burgundy, crossed the Alps and arrived in Lombardy. His Italian subjects refused to support him, and he climbed up the mountains to Canossa. On January 21st, 1077, Henry presented himself at the gate of the castle, but Gregory refused to see him unless he gave up his “crown and insignia of royalty and confessed himself unworthy of the name and honour of king.” Henry was at length admitted into the courtyard of the castle, and for three days he waited there in the bitter cold, dressed as a penitent, barefoot and fasting. One the fourth day Gregory received him. “Holy Father, spare me!” cried Henry in abject submission. Gregory raised him to his feet and pardoned him of sin. Then, Gregory asked Henry to accept certain conditions from him, and then Gregory sent Henry away.

In the meantime the subjects of Henry at home were plotting against him and even the pope’s forgiveness did not help restore their loyalty to Henry. Soon after his return they elected another king and civil war broke out. Henry continued to ignore Gregory’s decree concerning **investiture** and in 1080 he was excommunicated a second time.

This time Henry was supported by a number of the German bishops who resented Gregory’s interference with them, and encouraged by their help, Henry in turn declared Pope Gregory deposed, or no longer the pope! Henry appointed a new pope. There were now two emperors and two popes and war broke out between them all. Henry and his allies took over Rome and Pope Gregory was besieged in the castle of Sant’Angelo. Then people from Sicily came to the help of Gregory. After a four days’ siege they took the city, sacked it and then went home. Gregory was free, but the city was desolate and he was old. He went to Salerno (in Southern Italy) where he lived in exile. He died in 1085.

The investiture issue was still not settled, and Pope Gregory died in exile, but he had been one of the great popes of history, perhaps the greatest of the Middle Ages. Whatever some of the results of his work may have been, he made the papacy one of the great powers of the Middle Ages.

**Case Study #2: Pope Innocent III and King John I of England**

In 1198 Pope Innocent III, one of the great medieval popes, began his reign. He was only thirty-seven years old when he became pope, he had studied theology in the university of Paris and law at Bologna, he was gifted and capable. One of the aims of his papacy was to reform the Church. In order to reform the Church, one thing he did was attempt to extend the power of the pope in appointing church officials. This brought him into conflict with King John of England.

In earlier times, the king and the Witan (a group of English nobles who advised the king) had appointed archbishops and bishops, but as a result of various changes and agreements, it had become the custom by the start of the thirteenth century for church officials to be elected by members of the church or the monastery to elect their bishops and archbishops. The king had the right to nominate candidates, and in all cases he had to approve of the appointment when made.

Now, in 1205 the archbishop of Canterbury (an area in England) died. The monks elected a new archbishop without consulting the king. The sent him at once to Rome to be approved by the pope. King John named another candidate, and he too was sent to Rome. But Pope Innocent III rejected both men and appointed an archbishop of his own choice. King John refused to have anything to do with him and in 1208 Pope Innocent placed the whole of England under an **interdict**. Churches were closed, no Mass was celebrated, no Christian service might be held for the dead.

John was indifferent to the interdict except in so far as it gave him an opportunity to confiscate church property and enjoy some of its revenue. The following year King John himself was excommunicated. He still paid no attention, but he was unpopular, rumors of plots against him became common, and then in 1211 the Pope threatened that if he did not submit, he would issue a **papal bull** releasing all of the people of England from allegiance to him!

King John ended up giving in to Pope Innocent III, and in 1213 he agreed to approve and accept the archbishop Pope Innocent had appointed. He also agreed to let the Pope collect taxes from England—something that made the king even more unpopular.

The archbishop whom King John was forced to recognize was Stephen Langton. When he arrived in England he found the king hated and powerless, the **barons** divided, with no leader, united only in their opposition to the bad government and tyranny of the king. Stephen Langton placed himself at the head of the barons, and in 1215 they forced King John to sign Magna Carta. Magna Carta was a document that decreased the power of the king in England and gave power to the baron and middle class. The customs and liberties of England were now secured to the English people; tyranny had been opposed.